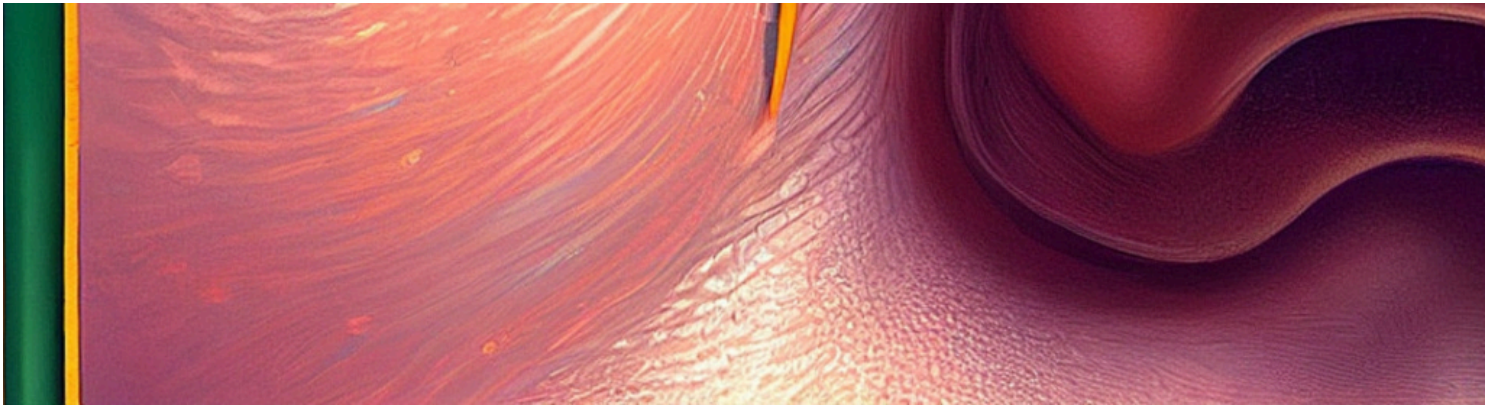


I CAN'T TAKE IT ANYMORE

By Deva Hardeep Singh



by Deva Hardeep Singh | Dharma Seeds Yoga Press© | 22 March 2024 |

New Book just published

First Chapter

He's Down and Not Responding

I crumpled onto the grass, the weight of the world pressing down on me. My entire body felt like lead, heavy and unresponsive. Hot tears welled up in my eyes, blurring my vision as they spilled over and traced a salty path down my cheeks. A ragged sob escaped my throat, quickly followed by another, and another. “I just can’t take this anymore,” I choked out, the words thick with despair.

The past four months had been a relentless assault on my health. A heart attack struck, leaving a staggering 99% blockage in one artery and 85% in another. This necessitated surgery to implant four stents, two in each artery. As if that weren’t enough, I battled through three separate septic tooth infections, each requiring a course of powerful antibiotics.

To top it all off, neuropathy and its complications had relegated me to a wheelchair. Exhausted and overwhelmed, a sense of hopelessness settled over me. It felt like my life was on a downward spiral, especially considering the three years of battling strange and uncommon health issues.

With only two months left until I graduated with my yoga teaching certificate in 2020, the universe seemed to throw a cruel curveball. “Why me? Why now?” the questions echoed in my mind. Was this the start of a long, downward spiral?

But amidst the despair, a spark ignited within me. “**This is MY health**,” I declared, a newfound resolve rising in my voice. “It’s MY decision on how to move forward.” I wouldn’t accept this as my downfall.

Changes were needed, and a powerful spirit, like a lion awakening from slumber, stirred within me.

My cardiologist’s handling of my health significantly impacted my well-being. After hinting at filing a complaint with the licensing board, they finally addressed my septic tooth. However, the oral surgeon didn’t remove me from my blood thinners, which my cardiologist answered with a “no, you can’t be off blood thinners, it will kill you.” to the 5 times I asked for this tooth to be removed. Well so will a septic tooth. This entire situation prompted me to find a new cardiologist.

Despite my thirty years of meditation and yoga practice, and even being an enrolled member of my tribe who’d witnessed the healing power of traditional medicine, I found myself blindly following recommendations, even though I had no prior heart problems. What my old cardiologist said did not feel right it felt wrong. Why was I passively accepting this, like a wet, mangy dog? I began to use my own mantra, “**This is my body, I am in charge of my own body’s health decisions.**” I knew better!

Confined to a wheelchair, my world shrunk, but my awareness grew. Navigating the sidewalks of my tribal low-income housing complex, I noticed the accessibility improvements the tribe had implemented. However, uneven sections caused by weather and the constant uphill inclines remained significant challenges. My daily struggles mirrored the difficulties faced by many disabled people – a stark reminder of the lack of control over my own health. This realization, along with my

physical limitations, underscored how out of shape I had become. I also finally relented that the things I cannot change I let go of.

During this challenging time, my family offered unwavering support. One family member, who practices our ancestral Yuchi traditions, used healing techniques that I could feel working on my body. The shift I experienced was immediate and confirmed my belief in the power of the Yuchi way. Logically, this situation calls for a balanced approach – integrating necessary Western medicine with a gradual shift towards traditional healing methods. In fact, many tribes health care systems integrate traditional medicine as an option for healing.

Let me be clear: I understand that the stents placed in my heart won't magically disappear. Similarly, the need to adopt a heart-healthy and diabetic-friendly diet and exercise routine is crucial. No medicine can substitute for a healthy lifestyle. That responsibility falls squarely on our own our shoulders, and yes, sometimes our egos can get in the way (and yes, I'm speaking from personal experience here). However, never go past your pain level. That is unhealthy no matter how you justify



The holiday season between Thanksgiving and Christmas had become a recurring nightmare for me in recent years. The first incident involved a terrifying drop in blood pressure to 35/50 (thirty-five over fifty). Paramedics called ahead on the way to the hospital, and upon arrival, they rushed me in on a gurney. A doctor and three nurses, all suited up in PPE (due to the 2021 COVID spikes), awaited me in the emergency room. Leaning close, the doctor delivered a sobering message: “***I don’t know if we can save you, but I’ll do my best.***” This stark statement, unlike

anything I'd ever heard from a doctor before, left me speechless. In that moment, I found solace in silently reciting my religion's main mantra, "Waheguru."



The following year, around the same holiday timeframe in 2022, my asthma flared up severely. After finally seeking emergency care, I ended up hospitalized for a week. Doctors discovered a rare and unidentified type of “wood” bacteria in my lungs. Treated with powerful antibiotics and high doses of Prednisone administered intravenously, my diagnosis shifted from asthma to COPD. Let’s just say it wasn’t the most festive way to spend the holidays! (Adding a touch of humor softens the situation)

Fast forward to 2023: the surprise heart attack. Coincidentally, this happened around the same time news broke about a professional football player who died from a septic tooth infection, which I had for 4 months. My cardiologist at the time had forbade my tooth extraction 5 times. I pulled the plug and had my tooth out in 2 days and a new Cardiologist. In total, three years of health struggles have limited my physical abilities and delayed the launch of my yoga teaching.

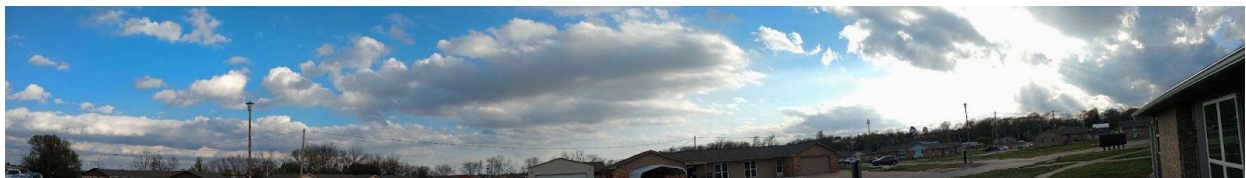
My passion is to offer free yoga instruction on YouTube, accessible to anyone in the world facing financial limitations. While many yoga instructors cater to paying clients, there’s a gap in resources for those who can’t afford them. This mission fueled my decision to train with the **Prison Yoga Project**.

My yoga website states this about me: **(he/him; neurodivergent, gay, ability injured, post-traumatic stress injury, borderline personality injury)** is an

Oklahoman, a **Yuchi Indian**, enrolled in the **Muscogee Nation**, and studied radio/TV/film in college. He's worked as an on-air personality, author, poet, artist, administrative assistant, petroleum landman, barista, staff writer, paralegal, concert promoter, music artist manager, content producer, and graphic designer. He spent 6 months as a National Data Team volunteer for the Bernie Sanders for President campaign. He is a freelance journalist with International papers and magazines with a social justice focus. Recently was able to join the **Hulu/FX Series Reservation Dogs**, as an extra (Seasons 2 & 3) He's been a meditator for over 30 years (Buddhist, Chan, Zen), teaches meditation, and provides yoga instruction, and a Reiki III Master. With all this knowledge sometimes I fail myself by allowing defeating thoughts to pervade.

There's an old country saying: "You can get glad in the same pants you got mad in." Embracing that spirit, I sat in my wheelchair, silently chanting again, "***This is my body. I am in charge of my own health decisions.***" Despite the sciatica nerve pain requiring a cushioned pillow, I started incorporating and sensing my relative's traditional medicine that he was preparing. I'm done with these health scares. It's time for a proactive approach. I'm applying the positive skills I've learned, like chair yoga or bed yoga if some regular yoga poses cause discomfort. Neuropathy may confine me to a wheelchair temporarily, but it won't stop my determination to achieve good health. One day, one week, one month at a time, I won't let the negativity of disability hold me back from my goals.

To be honest, how can one be gloomy when they look out over their reservation and see things like this?



Living in a small rural town has amplified my reliance on my animal support team. These service animals, which I train myself, have been invaluable companions for years, offering consistent emotional and practical support. My sister even jokes

that I'm a dog whisperer! Perhaps my ability to connect with animals stems from my upbringing on my grandparents' working farm. Having formed unique and personal bonds with these animals from a young age, a natural talent for understanding them developed – no special training needed. Maybe there was some truth to Dr. Doolittle after all!

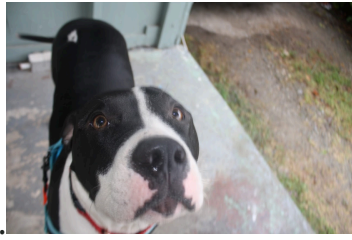


This is Oliver whom at first we thought was a female. The vet was rather quick to solve all our wrong assumptions. Oliver and I talked often. He was happy to be as



laid back as I was. That was years before but left us all to early.

My longest companion is Ellie Mae, my cocker spaniel. We've been together for a



lucky 12 of her 14 years.

In 2020, I had the joy of fostering Luke, a 1-year-old boxer/pitbull mix. He truly lived up to his nickname, the “**land seal**”! I've been fortunate to have him in my life for the past three years.

Over time, I've come to understand that life has its own current, flowing even when we don't actively control it. My faith reminds me of this wisdom: “**Selfless service is the support of the breath of life for the Gurmukh. Keep the Dear Lord enshrined in your heart.**” (Guru Granth Sahib, Ang 229). Instead of dwelling on dissatisfaction with my current situation, I need to focus on Seva, selfless service – just like the unwavering love and support my dogs offer me. Luke even helped out



in driving. Ellie Mae is in the passenger seat.

Perhaps for now, my yoga teaching needs to adapt to my current limitations.

While my physical mobility is restricted, I still have the ability to type, blog, and share my journey of finding yoga in the present moment. Writing has always come naturally to me, and I'm starting to feel inspired to pick it up again. After my heart attack, everything went on hold, but with spring arriving, it's time for me to bloom once more.

My meditations and reflections on scripture provide constant guidance. As Guru Granth Sahib teaches, “**Those who implant the Word of the Guru's Shabad within their hearts cut their connections with the five passions. They keep the ten organs under their control; their souls are enlightened. They alone acquire such**

stability, whom God blesses with His Mercy and Grace.”(Ang 236).

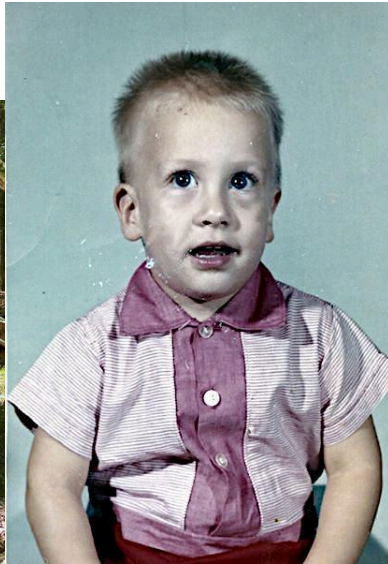


While I share my faith experiences, it's not meant to promote a specific religion. Perhaps these words resonate with similar teachings in your own faith or practices. Ultimately, finding stability during challenging times is a universal human quest. Feel free to draw strength from your own beliefs or sources of inspiration.

Sometimes, life throws a curveball that can feel like a cosmic wake-up call. Recently, while I was indulging in a bit of self-pity, I was struck by the wisdom of Guru Granth Sahib, Ang 968: “**He Himself is the paper, He Himself is the pen, and He Himself is the writer.**” When my entire existence is rooted in the belief that God is everything, the source and author of all, why then should I dwell on my current limitations? It's a powerful reminder to focus on the bigger picture. With my attention to the bigger picture, my disabilities seem so minuscule. **Yet they do limit** my capabilities. it's what I give free real estate inside my mind that I must stay vigilant over. And stopping it. That is my goal. Look beyond myself first.

Sometimes, even the strongest among us need a moment of quiet introspection. It's a chance to reconnect with our inner child, a form of self-healing that goes beyond the physical. This inner child, often referenced in psychology, represents a core part of ourselves that holds onto emotions and experiences from childhood. The picture to the left is me on my families ancestral Indian allotted land. I draw strength by just being there. I am renewed by all my ancestors upon our families

100 year old dwelling spot. All my previous relations walked, lived upon that land.



And this cute little guy deserves to be at peace within his own mind. Again the disabilities don't stop it's what I am doing inside my mind. I think this guy is in good hands with the guy above.

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Not everyone understands how neuropathy affects people. For me, it's frequent foot ulcers. This particular time the ulcer took 2 ½ months to heal. During this time I had to use a cane and not wear a shoe on the left foot. This was in 2020. This happens about every 3 months.

I averaged about every quarter, season change, and soltices an ER visit. From January 2020 till the end of 2023 that was my life. And again, inside my gut was crying out, “**I can’t take it anymore.**” This cycle must end or I will flow with it. Either way it was getting time I put my fears away and rest upon my yoga, meditation, and mantra singing. Hey if I can’t change it, not going to be angry, going to learn to live with it. But honestly I was tired, tired of the cycles, tired of the



pain, tired of the drain it was taking upon my body.

Let me be clear, I’m not claiming to have all the answers. I’m simply sharing my daily practices for inner healing, a glimpse into my personal journey. It all began with revisiting my blog posts from the past year. Immersing myself in those writings felt like a deep yearning of my mind, soul, and heart being fulfilled.



Meditation has always been a powerful tool for me. It helps me identify patterns or loops I might be stuck in within my neurodiverse mind. Self-healing is crucial, and it all starts with you. Remember, you are a gift – embrace that! Don't get bogged down by self-pity. Trust your instincts and let your voice be heard, speaking your truth.

Neurological issues are currently impacting my mobility, adding another layer to the challenges I face with COPD, asthma, type 2 diabetes, migraines, autism spectrum disorder, depression, and PTSD. While my body may not be perfect, my spiritual practices fuel my inner strength to persevere, to serve others, and to remain productive. These actions are the balm that heals my wounded inner child. And I can do these practices standing, sitting, or on my butt in a wheelchair. Location does not matter you adapt and move forward. Even as I write this book, a new pressure ulcer has become infected and swollen. This is a common occurrence for me due to my diabetes and neuropathy. While I can't prevent them entirely, I can manage them.

I take ownership of the situation. I acknowledge the problem, seek treatment, and instead of dwelling on it, I choose to focus on my well-being. This approach, pushing negativity aside and focusing on my true self, is how I heal and move



forward. It might not be your method, but it works for me.

Here my foot was red and swollen. When I went to bed the previous night it was fine. I woke up to fresh bleeding and soreness. I couldn't even put weight on it or the pain was unbearable. That is the life of diabetics with neuropathy. This happened while writing this book.

Despite what the previous picture might suggest, my foot was actually red and swollen that morning. It had been fine when I went to bed, but I woke up to fresh bleeding and intense pain, unable to put any weight on it. This is the unpredictable reality of living with diabetes and neuropathy.

In such situations, I have a choice: succumb to anger at my limitations, or manage them and refocus on the spiritual work I find so fulfilling. Meditation is a powerful tool in this regard. It serves as a form of mindfulness, a mental martial art that equips me to deal with challenges. There are many forms of meditation, from the traditional practice of quieting the mind to more esoteric approaches. This is why I started my free ***Mindfulness ~ The Minds Martial Artist™*** program. To pass this on to others freely to assist them.

Disability doesn't define a person, it's just one part of a vast and beautiful spectrum. We're talking about everyone, from newborns to seasoned souls.

They're human, just like you and me, with bodies that move and abilities that differ.

Here's the truth: every single person on this Earth deserves the chance to explore their inner peace, their strength, their potential. We all entered this world the same way, helpless and full of possibility. And we'll all leave it someday. But in between those breaths, we deserve to be seen, to be heard, to be valued.

Our skills may vary, but the human desire to learn, to grow – that never expires. Let's open doors, not limitations. Let's create a world where everyone has the chance to find what brings them light.



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